

## THIS LAD'S CRAVING FOR GOOD FOOD GOT HIM INTO CONSIDERABLE TROUBLE

BY JANE WHITAKER

In a cell in the County Jail, alone with his thoughts, a boy charged with burglary is awaiting the action of the grand jury and crying out his fear of punishment, his loneliness, his regrets, his excuses, while he humorously yet piteously blends in his letters to his one friend his healthy animal craving for good food that doesn't desert him even in the terror of remorse.

If it can be said that there are ever excuses for crime, life has offered this boy a few.

He has been an orphan for several years; his best friend, his older sister, is dead. Another sister is shallow-minded, pitying not the plight of the boy, but herself for the disgrace he has brought upon her. His brothers so far have done nothing for him. The home of his older sister was closed to him by his brother-in-law as soon as the sister was placed in her grave and the boy was thrown out, without work or money, on to the streets.

He came under the influence of bad company, youthful desperadoes who persuaded him, when he was hungry, to join them in their crime of robbing a drug store.

And for almost three months he knew secret fear and remorse and even a little of the comfort of believing he would never be found out or have to pay for his one criminal act, and then the shadow covered him and he was arrested.

His story and the letters he has written were given to me by his one friend, a little woman with a great big heart, who hoped that the publication of the letters might serve to warn some other boy of the wages of sin, even while she is doing everything in her power to save this boy from paying to the full extent of the law.

The first letter was written before

he was held to the grand jury and after his arrest. It reads:

"Dear Mrs. C.: I was arrested last Thursday and I will have my trial Friday, the 3d of April. I am in such a bad fix, with no one to do anything for me. I think I will be bound over to the grand jury. If I do, I will be here 90 days before I have a trial. I wish I had someone to speak a good word for me in court. I am to be tried before Judge Scully. Won't you please come and see what becomes of me? I may get from 1 to 20 years.

"Oh, if some one would only come and see me. If some one would only come to my trial and help talk for me maybe I could get out on a year parole. Judge Scully is a good judge.

"I am lonesome and I am sorry for what I have done. I and three other boys held up a drug store last January. Just got arrested for it. I wish I had something good to eat. Can you come and hear the trial? Please don't forget me. I pray to God you will do the best you can for me. Will you buy me something to eat? I feel that I am going to the penitentiary.

"Answer at once please, and try to see my trial."

The next letter was written after the trial before Judge Scully, when the evidence against the boy was so strong that he was bound over to the grand jury.

"Dear Mrs. C.: I received the books, also the very nice food. How I enjoy it and appreciate it from the bottom of my heart. I am in a place where I realize everything that is done for me. If it were not for you, I don't know what I would do. And don't forget if I am given a chance in life I will try to repay you. I never will forget you.

"That happened last January and I have not done anything since. I have suffered through life and at nights when I say my prayers I hope something may turn up to give me a